

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1 and 3, cancel claims 2, 5, 6, 8, and 13 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein, and add new claims 14-17.

1. (Currently Amended) An ink tank comprising a casing having a front wall provided with a coupling, and a bag disposed in said casing and connected to said coupling, wherein the casing comprises a first shell including the entirety of said front wall, and a second shell welded to the first shell said casing having a box-like configuration and the first and second shells are fitted together at a seam which passes substantially through the center of side walls of the casing in a plane essentially in parallel with the front wall.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) The ink tank according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein each of the first and second shells has a flange extending along the seam.

4. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 3, wherein the first and second shells are spot-welded at the flanges.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The ink tank according to claim 1, wherein the first and second shells are injection-molded parts.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) A method of manufacturing an ink tank including a casing having a front wall formed with a coupling, and a bag disposed in said casing, which comprises:

- molding a first shell and a second shell, the first shell having said front wall with said coupling formed therein and an open end opposite the front wall;
- connecting the bag to the coupling, such that a rear portion of the bag projects out of the open end of the first shell;
- fitting the second shell over the projecting portion of the bag; and
- welding the first and second shells together.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein the first and second shells are welded together by ultrasonic welding.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein the first and second shells are welded together by spot-welding.

12. (Original) A method of filling an ink bag disposed in a casing having a front wall formed with a coupling connected to the bag, the casing further containing a first shell including said front wall and a second shell welded to the first shell into a box-like configuration, with the shells being fitted together at a seam which passes essentially through the center of the side walls of the casing in a plane substantially parallel with the front wall, each of the first and second shells having at least one flange extending along the seam and the shells are spotwelded at these flanges, which comprises introducing the ink from outside the container through the coupling into the bag whereby the air pressure within the casing outside the bag is maintained in equilibrium with the air pressure outside the casing.

13. (Canceled)

14. (New) An ink tank comprising a casing having a front wall provided with a coupling, and a bag disposed in said casing and connected to said coupling, wherein the casing comprises a first shell including the entirety of said front wall, and a second shell welded to the first shell,

and wherein the second shell has a roof-shaped top portion delimited by an upwardly sloping wall formed integrally with the second shell and a downwardly sloping wall formed integrally with the first shell and projecting from a rear end of a top wall thereof.

15. (New) An ink tank comprising a casing having a front wall provided with a coupling, and a bag disposed in said casing and connected to said coupling, wherein the casing comprises a first shell including the entirety of said front wall, and a second shell welded to the first shell,

and wherein the first shell has an internal wall which projects downwardly from the top wall into the interior of the casing and is positioned in a longitudinal median plane of the casing.

16. (New) An ink tank comprising a casing having a front wall provided with a coupling, and a bag disposed in said casing and connected to said coupling, wherein the casing comprises a first shell including the entirety of said front wall, and a second shell welded to the first shell,

and wherein a supply port for compressed air is provided in the second shell of the casing.

17. (New) An ink tank comprising a casing having a front wall provided with a coupling, and a bag disposed in said casing and connected to said coupling, wherein the casing comprises a first shell including the entirety of said front wall, and a second shell welded to the first shell,

and wherein the coupling is integral with the front wall.